



# The Trail Mail



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## Bruthen to Nicholson Trail Damage

During the recent fire threat near Bruthen a bulldozer was sent along the trail to grade and create turn-arounds. The result was severe damage to the trail surface in some areas and total scraping of the trail edges for the entire distance leaving piles of ballast and soil along the edge of the trail. The trail is now up to 8m wide in areas. Many young casuarinas, blackwoods eucalypts just starting to regenerate were pushed over. The turn- arounds were created by bulldozing large areas the width of the reserve and leaving heaps of plants and soil.

The reasons given for this action by the CFA were to:

1. create access for fire trucks – which was unnecessary as they could have travelled the trail using the existing trail and turned around on the flat areas without bulldozing
2. reduce fuel load – this action did nothing to reduce the fuel load

This action stimulated many letters to the Bairnsdale Advertiser – from trail users appalled by the damage, and some supporting the action.

Although the damage is supposed to be repaired – this will probably only be the actual surface- it will take years for the trail edges and the adjacent areas, where the bulldozer just shoved everything aside because it could, to recover.

For those of us who value the trail for being an idyllic bush trail this has been a shocking and devastating event – a fire would have been a far better option.

This brings into question the purpose of the trail – is it a fire access trail?

It seems difficult to get across to the CFA folk that this is a trail – not a road and its value to most of the community is that it is a trail.

It is very difficult to invest time and energy into developing the rail trail when the no doubt well-meaning, but ill- informed actions can occur.

The irony is the cost of repairing the damage could have funded a trail manager who could undertake fuel reduction at the appropriate time.

*Susan Peirce*



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## Ride the Trail in a Day



Janice and Dawn at Nowa Nowa



Loading the bikes at Orbost



Sue greeting the incoming riders at Orbost

Lucky with the weather! The morning was coolish – sun out by 11am after morning tea in Bruthen – and then a pleasant 22C with breeze. Perfect riding conditions.

This meant that the 80 participants all completed the 100k – with the exception of one rider unable to repair a series of punctures despite assistance from many persons experienced in such matters – problem was unusual tube size. So he was transported to the finish and despite his mechanical breakdown was fulsome in praise of the trail and the delight of cycling on a perfect day with friends – ‘life doesn’t get better than this!’

For many riders this was their first 100k – that is such an achievement. Its always interesting to look at the wide variety of persons enjoying cycling – the super fit and competent – Warren Meade and Chris were really charged and finished in 3 hrs and 40 mins, including stops– so only seen as they flew past! They did surprise a group of wallabies hopping across the track – the last one was a bit slow (not used to such speedy cyclists?) – Warren hit it and it skidded into the middle of the track and Chris ran over it and managed to stay on his bike – the wallaby was stunned but hopped off. By a strange co-incidence our last riders also came across a group of wallabies and Ash did hit one and managed to stay on his bike. Maybe the same wallabies!

Keith was more civilized and did stop for morning tea and lunch, returning to Orbost by 1pm. A group from Melbourne training for the Great Vic bike ride were also very speedy.

Most riders took advantage of the comfortable morning tea and lunch breaks for refreshments and a yarn and cycled into Forest park between 3 and 4.30 pm.

Our estimates of the times worked well – we just got morning tea ready for the leaders at about 10 am. Using the Bruthen pub worked well – it was easy for Jill and Clive to check everyone in. Many riders enjoyed cake with a cup of tea or coffee and kept the soft drink for later. Tables were available to sit and meet a few others

or catch up with friends before the next stage to Nowa Nowa. Janice and Marie had set up chairs, tables and umbrellas and opened the shop with more cool drinks and snacks at the reserve – the breeze and sun made a perfect spring day to enjoy.

All were out of the reserve by 1.00pm to complete the final 37k to Forest Park.

The bus was a little late – arriving at Forest Park just after 5pm – but there seemed to be plenty of post ride stretching or resting in the sun so the only stressed person was the organiser.

Bikes were loaded – the bus was full of happy chappies and no doubt the Bairnsdale pubs and restaurants enjoyed some extra custom.

Thanks to Andrew, Evan and Ash for riding last, meeting Michael (with vehicle) at predetermined road crossings. Riders did notice and were re-assured that this back up was provided, to Clive and Jill for checking in riders at Bruthen. Clive then took to his bicycle and Jill stood at the end of the trail at Nowa Nowa to direct cyclists off the trail to the reserve. The only difficult bit in terms of directions was the Nowa Nowa section however no-one got very lost.

Janice, and Marie and helpers did a fantastic job at the reserve. Marlene did a great job encouraging the Orbost folk rounding up 16 cyclists. About the same number from Bairnsdale, and 50 from out of the area. It was an interesting group – all ages, bike riding buddies and clubs, one chap who had been the Orbost general practitioner in the 1960’s, quite pleased with his 100k!

Thanks to Gillicks Buslines and David Parry Buses and Robyn and Bruthen Inn staff.

Michael did the lion’s share of the administrative work. I did all the worrying!

The objective was to cover costs and we did this – with a surplus of \$1100 – this will go to more amenities on the trail.

We only advertised in our Newsletter and Bicycle



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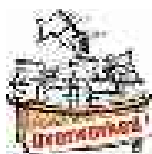
Victoria – not wanting to have advertising expenses and to keep the event small and manageable.

The feedback was very positive – for the next few days we had e-mails congratulating the Friends on the organisation of the event, some wanting more details of the area with a view to planning more cycling adventures centered on Rail trail and Mississippi trail.

*Sue Peirce*

There is no doubt the weather was the all important ingredient – especially considering what was to happen for the rest of the summer.

Most of all – thanks to all the cyclists who cheerfully supported this event.



*Thanks to Sue and Michael for their work.*



Relaxing at Nowa Nowa before the ride into Orbost.

## Donations of seats adds visitor comfort.

The Management Committee has taken delivery of three out doors seats which have been produced by members of the Mitchell River Rotary Club. The seats have treated pine slats bolted to heavy caste concrete 'legs'. One is to be installed near the Nicholson Bridge as a memorial to the late Barry Holt, past President of Railtrails Australia. It will be dedicated on Sunday April 29th. Railtrails Australia is donating this seat as a fitting addition to the trail. A Friend of the Rail Trail has donated another of this set and it will be installed near Sandford Lane, with a view to the Lakes. The third seat is "looking for a donor". It will be installed closer to Bairnsdale opposite an old mile post (see below). Each seat 'costs' \$200 as a donation to Mitchell River Rotary.



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## Fourteen Businesses Listed For New Brochure.

The following local businesses have taken a small ad to be included in the new information brochure and map. They will also be listed on the web site. We thank them for their valuable support.

Mingling Waters Waterfront Wilderness Retreat  
 Lake Whadie Cafe  
 Nicholson General Store / Motel  
 Waterholes Guest House  
 Orbost Countryman Motor Inn  
 Mitchell Gardens Holiday Park  
 Bruthen Inn  
 beachside loft at eagle point  
 Mitchell Motor Inn P/L  
 Stringybark Cottages  
 Perrys Bus Service  
 Orbost Country Roads Motor Inn  
 Lakes Entrance Waverley House Cottages  
 Snowy River Homestead B&B

NOWA NOWA  
 BAIRNSDALE  
 NICHOLSON  
 WATERHOLES  
 ORBOST  
 BAIRNSDALE  
 BRUTHEN  
 EAGLE POINT  
 BAIRNSDALE  
 SARSFIELD  
 ORBOST  
 ORBOST  
 LAKES ENTRANCE  
 NEWMERELLA

## Encouraging response to funding application for rainforest project.

An application to E G Catchment Management Authority for funding to assist with the Nicholson remnant temperate rainforest revegetation project (west side of the bridge) is gaining approval but there is a delay while details of suitable fencing are sorted out. A major first step is to eliminate rabbits then keep them out of the selected area, and that poses some fencing problems. Other items which will be installed once replanting can commence is a shelter and information signboard. These will be just off the trail at the eastern end of the north paddock which used to be part of the former Nicholson station grounds. The development will open an access route from a future housing subdivision to the north, onto the trail, and south to the township and riverside jetties.

## Rail Trail Repair Work Between Nicholson and Bruthen.

A further quote is being obtained for reinstatement of the damaged sections of the trail following the recent fires threat. The Management Committee has also decided to use large rocks for blocking off illegal access at key points. Granite Rock Quarry has agreed to assist with a special price for rocks which measure about 70 cms in diameter. One location to be treated is an entry just north of the Bumberrah station ground (shelter). Rocks are also being used at some problem locations on the Nowa Nowa - Orbost section.

More works at the Trestle bridge and Drivers Break cutting. Due to start March/April, this will involve a considerable amount of heavy construction work, to repair and improve drainage and access, and reduce the problems of batter slopes collapsing from storm water runoff.





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## Replanting of a Concrete Mile Post Near Bairnsdale.

The 174 Mile post has been located just east of Bairnsdale. Frank Garden has removed it for painting in traditional white with the indented numbers highlighted in black. This historic marker will be relocated and given some landscaping treatment with suitable vegetation, making it a highlight and no doubt an interesting photo opportunity. One of the Mitchell River Rotary Club seats will also be installed close by.

## EASTGIPPBUG

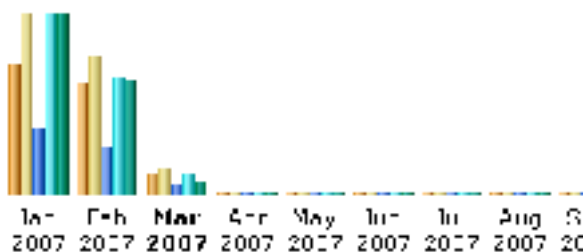
Check out this new web site:

<http://www.eastgippbug.com/>



EastGippBug is an Internet based "virtual" entity giving voice to issues affecting bicycle riders across East Gippsland, speaking with those who can affect change and building advocacy for more and safer cycling.

### WEB SITE STATS



Month	Unique visitors	Number of visits	Pages
Jan 2007	849	1152	5725
Feb 2007	777	975	4019



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## THE LINE OPENS

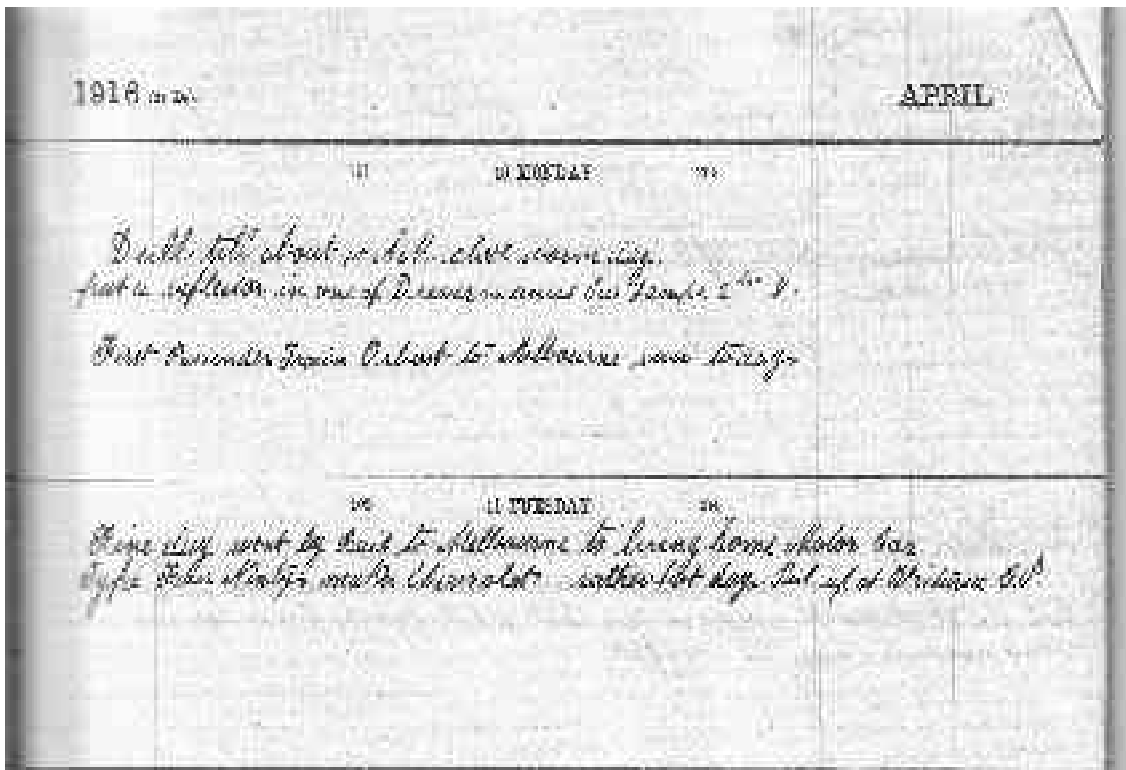
***April or January? Just when was the line opened? The one definite fact is that it was officially opened in 1916. However, different sources revealed several "official" opening dates .***



What seems to have occurred is that the line was officially opened on Jan 12 but not used as a passenger line until April 10. The Snowy River Mail reported on Friday, Jan 7, 1916 : "*A demonstration to celebrate the establishment of railway communication with Orbost will take place on Tuesday afternoon when a train will arrive conveying a large number of Melbourne and other visitors. On arrival of the train the line will be formally declared open for traffic, but as there is a lot of work to do yet the Commissioners will not be able to take it over for another month or six weeks.....*" .

The newspaper report of the opening describes the special train of four corridor carriages and a large van bursting through the ribbon stretched across the trail to officially open the line. The day had been stormy "*with*

*clouds of dust sweeping the streets...but there was a large attendance with the Orbost population being well represented.*" The report goes on to describe the high number of dignitaries from Melbourne who arrived with their families - 140 in all. Distinguished visitors included the Governor, Premier Sir Alexander Peacock, the Minister for Railways Mr McKenzie, several other state ministers and MPs and railway personnel. ( The Governor stayed two weeks fishing and shooting, visiting Mallacoota, Eden and Buchan Caves.) There were many speeches with a similar theme of the hope of extending the line through to the NSW border in the near future. The premier then promised a special Wednesday picnic train to Nowa Nowa for the children and this duly took place.



***This is a copy of Alan Richardson's diary showing that perhaps the railway wasn't in public use until April 10. (The Richardsons were early Orbost pioneers. ) It seems, though, that Orbost residents were keen to use the service as soon as it became available.***





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*This article from the Snowy River Mail dated Friday March 24, 1916 also indicates that the line didn't open to the public until April.*

Works at the Orbost end of the railway are being hurried on. Mr Kernot, chief engineer, was here on Tuesday, accompanied by Mr Oliver, engineer of the Public Works Department. It is understood that the Railway Commissioners will take over the line on 3rd April, and we are informed that the first passenger train will run on Tuesday, the 11th. There will be a daily train leaving Orbost at 8.50 a.m., arriving at Bairnsdale at noon, and returning from Bairnsdale on the arrival of the afternoon train from Melbourne.



The official party at the opening. In the front row are Frank Nixon (shire president); Sir Alexander Peacock (premier of Vic.) and their wives



First train bringing the Melbourne visitors to Orbost for the official opening.



The lucky children who travelled by train to Nowa Nowa on the special picnic train.

★ Special thanks to John Phillips of Orbost Historical Society and Heather Richardson for the source materials.

*Next Issue: timetables and reminiscences*



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Check regularly at [www.eastgippslandrailtrail.com](http://www.eastgippslandrailtrail.com) for updates.



## BICYCLE RIDES

Date	Location	Contact
March 18	Meet Wolseley St car park Orbest 9:00am. Ride along forest roads South Boundary, Break Neck and Storers Track to the falls. Walk the 4km to the old reservoir having lunch at the picnic area back at Young's Creek. Return via the Bonang Road on the tar. Ride 30km.	Marlene 5154 1232
May 19 20	Saturday: Orbest to Buchan, Sunday: Buchan to Orbest via Nowa Nowa and rail trail - s. Stay overnight with Buchan Valley Log Cabins hosts: Peter and Rosie White P.O. Box 37 Buchan Victoria 3885 Phone 03 5155 9494 Email: enquiries@buchanlogcabins.com.au ; Cost approx \$40 per person share \$80 double. Restaurant facilities will be available for the Saturday evening. Start 9:00am Forest Park.	Keith 5154 123
August 26	Around Nicholson	Sue 5156 8228
October 14	Bruthen to Nowa Nowa	Sue 5156 8228
December	Tostaree to Lake Tyers	details to be announced

## Working Bees

April TBA	Nicholson	Sue 5156 8228
August 26	Nicholson	Sue 5156 8228

## Meetings

May 14	Bairnsdale, Grand Terminus Hotel 7pm
July 15 <sup>th</sup>	Bruthen AGM, Bruthen Inn 7pm
Sept 10 <sup>th</sup>	Nowa Nowa, 7pm
Nov 12 <sup>th</sup>	Nicholson Hotel 7pm